

Dr. Steininger

OFFICE OF THE DD/I

20 April 1974

NOTE FOR THE DIRECTOR

FROM: Ed Proctor

I have just reviewed [redacted] draft letter from you to Lew Allen concerning his National SIGINT Plan. I am quite concerned about the latitude it gives Lew with respect to the substantive requirements. The proposed letter eliminates the established procedures for providing the SIGINT collectors and processors with the coordinated views of the producers of finished intelligence. USIB and its subcommittees should provide this guidance rather than allowing Lew to pick and choose from what the various consumers may want.

I know your philosophy is to put the best man in charge of drafting a plan of this sort, to give him plenty of latitude and then review the results. If you find the plan deficient in some respects, you will send it back.

But in an activity so complicated and so significant as the SIGINT effort, many of us in the Agency feel we cannot afford a year of uncertainty or possible failure in an activity with such far-reaching implications. There are so many elements involved

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in SIGINT that it is extremely difficult if not impossible to reverse a change once the momentum exists.

Moreover, we cannot afford to establish the precedent of going around coordinated community guidance through USIB.

Although I share your confidence in Lew as a person, you must face the fact that he is a short-timer; nor do you know how good his replacement will be. A plan of this sort needs continuity and this continuity can best be gotten from institutions like USIB and its supporting structure.

We producers of finished intelligence must have a coordinated voice in the SIGINT plan. The draft letter to Lew reads us out of the action. We can bring to bear the understanding of the contributions of other sources that Lew in his one-source role cannot.

My historical understanding of how bad it was when the producers of intelligence had no voice in guiding SIGINT leads me to predict unfortunate consequences from what I can only view as several steps backward.

and I have discussed this problem extensively, and he has prepared a substitute draft letter. I have attached it for your consideration.

Ed *Ed*

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